

Forward!

Official Organ of The Black Students Union
of Concordia University
Sir George Williams Campus.

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A Critical Look at the Administration of the
Black Students Union.

by Brian John

Lead the way and we shall follow. It's so easy! The present executive of the B.S.U. has accepted the responsibility of overseeing and regulating the affairs of the Union. But while we must be thankfull to them for lending their services, one cannot escape the fact that the execution of duties has fallen way below an acceptable level.

The obvious remark: "Why didnt someone else take the job?", or, "Who really cares?" It is high time that we stop looking for a scapegoat and shoulder our responsibilities. The prestige of the various posts seems to have taken priority over the real reasons for which the members were elected.

With a wide array of potential coming from our fellow Caribbean students (and others), the B.S.U. can forge ahead with a little more imagination, a little more discipline..... There are many students who are willing to lend a hand with regard to the various activities put on. However they have become disenchanted and fed-up by the attitude of a few members on the executive body. Your term of office is over the half-way mark, but maybe we can all try a little harder, and possibly go forward.

Black Students Union VS Caribbean Students Union.

by Cecil Roach

These remarks are twofold in their intended purposes; first to present my positions on the subject, and second I hope that they will open the subject for further discussion and debate.

In the first place we are not a Black Students Union, and the existence

2

of an African Student Association gives testament to that fact. Now in no way am I criticizing the right of the African Students to have their needs and aspirations served by their own organization. In fact I believe it is their perogative. The point is that they are Black and not part of the B.S.U. thus creating a farce out of the name Black Student Union.

Secondly 90% if not more of the B.S.U. members are Caribbean and not all Caribbean peoples are black. The situation of East Indian students of Caribbean origin is one that has to be taken into consideration here. These students don't participate in the B.S.U. because the name suggests that they are not welcomed. In disregard of the arguement that it is their fault if they don't participate; let me simply say that it is incumbant upon the organization to make these students feel welcomed.

I therefore propose that we change the name of the organization from Black Student Union to Caribbean Student Union. This I feel would be one of the basis upon which a more vibrant and meaningful organization can be built.

The Congress of Commonwealth Caribbean Immigrants

In the last issue of the Forward you were told about the Congress held at the University of Montreal on the 6th of January to the 9th.

A summary of events :

The purpose of the congress was to prepare a forum for frank discussion among leaders in the Quebec Community, and the Caribbean people on a variety of subjects directly affecting Caribbean people in a spirit and atmosphere of unity and understanding. There were nine workshops setup for the discussions on topics such as : Immigration and The Law, Housing and Social Services, Culture and Racism, Education etc. Some of the most informed persons in each field presented papers or spoke on the relevant subjects.

Where ever a problem was identified reccommendations were made in the form of resolutions to be carried out by a continuing committee.

One of the resolutions was a call by the Congress on the trade unions to push for an expansion of the labour code and to do something about these exploited Caribbean workers. We of the committee know that most north American unions are part of the socio-econ~~omic~~ system and in many ways help to oppress the workers. So how would such resolutions be achieved? The committee will ally itself with other progressive groups and form a common front to put pressure not on the government but on the unions. themselves.

THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

The organizing committee responsible for the putting together of this resourceful forum was mainly composed of Concordia students. Out of a membership of eight, five were from Sir George Campus, one from Loyola campus the other two are workers.

CRITICISMS

Before the first session of the Congress commerced, there were some elements in the committee who had their own preconceived notions as to what the Congress was all about. Some saw the members of the committee as a communist group, others saw us as a group of incapable individual being used by the Quebec communist party.

What ~~were~~ the basis for these arguements? The committee provided a list of sixty-four sponsors which included such organizations as churches, the high commissioners of the Caribbean Governments, some prominent individuals, organizations that have direct relationships with Caribbean people and immigrants in general. But there was one organization on the list which offended many individuals or so called leaders of the black community. The communist party.

We the members of the Congress committee sense a somewhat reactionary

4

behavior by the so-called establishment leadership of the Black community. One has only to read the article covered by the Oracle to understand this.

It is not our intention to challenge the leadership, nor have we set up ourselves as community leaders, we are just a group of concerned students, workers who have identified a problem and are working to find solutions. Our only sin is that we are not prepared to work under the status quo.

by Laurence Fredericks

The Recent Jamaican Elections

by Michael Pennycook.

On Wednesday, Dec., 15th, 1976 the Jamaican people voted in one of the most critical elections in that country's history. The North American news media carried articles before the elections and it was the general consensus that this was an election to decide between socialism and capitalism.

This "awareness" of Jamaica and her politics had in fact been becoming more and more evident in the past two years, but the media's effort in "analysing" the Jamaican situation turned out to be nothing more than an attempt to bully the Jamaican people in line with North America's aspirations. Various reports coming out of the Island told of other covert actions being carried out in the Island designed to make it seem as if Michael Manley and his PNP government were incapable of governing.

The election was preceded by a period of about one year of escalated violence which left many people dead, and culminated in the government declaring a state of emergency and detaining a number of

political activists including a vice-president of the opposition JLP and a number of Known political gunmen. Also the government increased contact with Cuba and the positive role the Cubans were performing in Jamaica were becoming cause for concern by the great North American powers. The opposition JLP, admittedly representing a reverse of the ruling government's policies, used the battered and useless communist bogey, in an attempt to, as they put it in a campaign slogan, "Turn Them Back".

What happened? Despite all the efforts to demoralise the Jamaican people with regards to the Manley government, the Manley led PNP party secured a landslide victory winning 48 out of the 60 seats in the House of Representatives. This was the heaviest victory ever achieved in Jamaica's political History and represented a tremendous vote of confidence by the Jamaican populace in Mr. Manley, his government and their policies.

This vote is an indication of the increasing sophistication of the voting public as to their ablity to decide what is in their own best interest. One remembers the referendum on West Indian Federation where pure political gimmickry induced the Jamaican people to vote against a plan which was in their interest. Today we see attempts to rewrite the people of the Caribbean and by voting for the PNP; the Jamaican people have indicated their support for these and the other progressive policies.

But the election victory is but a victory in one battle of the whole war. The next five years represent the most crucial period in Jamaica's brief history and the grave state of the Island's economy is the issue of utmost priority. How quickly and how well Jamaica overcomes her financial difficulties will not depend on the generosity of the North American or European powers, but on how effectively the government can

mobilize the people towards nation building.

Editorial

by Derek N. Gooding

Members of the B.S.U. are very fortunate that they have the opportunity of learning about their Caribbean brothers and sisters (we are usually called cousins but we're closer than that). What is unfortunate is that we are a minute minority and that broadly speaking us Caribbean people are still divided and hung up on petty differences.

The Caribbean people are continuing to think along these lines that have made us strangers within our own family. Even in the B.S.U. where the winds of change should be present one finds remenants of these diverse attitudes. The classic rivalry between Trinidad and Jamaica persists and one is saddened to hear the futile arguments that try to decide which of these two proud countries is "better". One still hears the term "small Island" being used in a derogatory manner and, generally we who boast of being "aware" prolong the fantasy that we are totally different. But how can a people, having the same roots and facing a common enemy, be different.

Sometimes when we quarrel (not discuss) over why we think in this way most of us fall back on our favorite excuses- slavery and colonialism. Those two demons must really have broad backs for all our problems are blamed upon them. Face it, that's part of the lost past, its the present and future we should be concerned about.

So let's stop wasting our time and dividing ourselves by arguing over which is the richest, most beautiful or most progressive Caribbean nation. In that way we hurt ourselves and look like the fools they want us to be.

Sports News

by Don Charles

For those of you who are not aware, the B.S.U. has set up a Sports Committee whose main purpose is to co-ordinate and organize sports programs for it's members. We have obtained the gym Facilities at H.M.S. Donnacona on Drummond Street. These facilities we use on alternate Friday's from 5-7 pm. during which time we play Basketball, Netball and Soccer in which both men and women can participate.

These gym sessions started on the 14th of January. So therefore the next session will be on the 28th of January, so do come and participate. There are also plans set up for a Table Tennis Tournament between both the men and women members of the Union. This tournament will most likely be a three day event with the winner recieving a trophy or some other prize. A list will be placed in the B.S.U. and all members are urged to sign up quickly so that the competition can get under way. There is Table Tennis equipment available for any member wishing to use them.

At this point it should be noted that the majority of Black students in this university do not participate in any event hosted by the union and I think it's about time that we students realize that there is more to University life than studying 24 hours a day.